

REMARKS

Claims 22, 24-27, 29-31, and 33-34 are pending in this application.

Claims 23, 28, and 32 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 22, 27, and 31 are amended to incorporate elements of claims 23, 28, and 32, respectively. Claims 22, 27, and 31 are further amended to clarify that the elements of claims 23, 28, and 32, respectively, make up the “player tracking information image.” “Player tracking information,” as recited in claims 22, 27, and 31, may include information that is not included in a “player tracking information image.” Claims 22, 27, and 31 are also amended to clarify that player tracking information and a game image are displayed “to a player.”

The remaining claims are unchanged.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 22-34 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 5,971,271 to Wynn et al. (Wynn) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,241,524 to Aoshima et al. (Aoshima).

Applicants respectfully disagree with the statement, on page 2 of the Office Action, that Aoshima teaches the feature of determining “one or more regions of the game image that are unimportant to game play,” as recited in claim 22. Figure 7 in Aoshima is a flow chart illustrating the process of displaying an advice image. The Office Action equates this advice image with the player tracking information image recited in claim 22. Figure 7, however, does not disclose the feature of determining one or more regions of the game image that are unimportant to game play in the process of displaying an advice image. (Col. 10, lines 26-60). The Office Action asserts that in Figure 9, a message is displayed that does not block the enemy target aimed at (Office Action, page 3). While there is an enemy target displayed in Figure 9 (i.e., the enemy tank 510), there is no disclosure that the message is displayed so as to not block the enemy target. The fact that the enemy target is not blocked in Figure 9 is due to chance, as there is no step of determining one or more regions of the game image that are unimportant to game play in Aoshima.

In response to these points, the Examiner issued an Advisory Action in which he stated that the point of Aoshima “is not to block a target while displaying an advice message.” Applicants respectfully submit that this does not address the issue of whether Aoshima suggests the claim element of determining “one or more regions of the game image that are unimportant to game play.” (Claim 22). Aoshima discloses outputting advice without interfering with the proceeding of the game. (Col. 2, lines 2-5). Aoshima accomplishes this by the message window, which is part of the advice image, being transparent so as not to interfere with the game image. (Col. 9, line 66 through Col. 10, line 3). As explained above, there is no disclosure in Aoshima that the message is displayed so as to not block the enemy target.

In order to further the prosecution of the pending claims, however, claims 22, 27, and 31 are amended to further distinguish them over Wynn and Aoshima. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the outstanding rejection in view of the amendments and the following remarks. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Claim 22, as amended, recites a gaming machine in which the game video display is used to simultaneously display player tracking information (in the form of a player tracking information image) and a game image to a player on the same display. While it is believed that claim 22, as previously presented, required the display of “player tracking information and a game image to a player,” the claim is amended to remove any doubt that these two things are displayed to a player. The player tracking information image may include “a player name, player ID, point data, progressive data, extra credit data, bonus data, loyalty data, and award data.” (Claim 22). Conventional gaming machines use additional displays (i.e., not the game video display) to display player tracking information (page 1, lines 27-29). By presenting a player tracking information image in combination with a game image on a single game video display, as claimed, this information is easier for the player to see (page 2, lines 15-16). As well, the information can be displayed in color with animated graphics, making the information even more noticeable (page 2, lines 16-18).

Wynn is directed to “an enhanced gaming device including an audio and a video channel between the gaming device and a central location manned by one or more concierges who can communicate with the player, answer questions, make reservations and, in general, attend to the requests of the player.” (Abstract). Figure 19 shows a display of this gaming device in operation, where a video image of a concierge is displayed.

Wynn, however, does not disclose displaying a “player tracking information image” to a player, “wherein the player tracking information image includes one or more items selected from the group consisting of a player name, player ID, point data, progressive data, extra credit data, bonus data, loyalty data, and award data.” (Claim 22). The image of the concierge is not such a player tracking information image. The concierge’s monitor may display player identification and information, but this player identification and information is never displayed to the player. (Col. 8, lines 42-44). The concierge may also communicate with the player by displaying a “broadcast message or videos” on the player’s monitor or answer questions by “showing a video.” (Col. 11, lines 1-25). Furthermore, the concierge may remind the player of his club card bonus level. (Col. 2, lines 37-45). These messages and reminders from the concierge, and videos shown by the concierge, however, are not a “player tracking information image” that includes “a player name, player ID, point data, progressive data, extra credit data, bonus data, loyalty data, or award data.” (Claim 22).

Aoshima fails to cure the deficiencies of Wynn with respect to the above quoted features, regardless of whether Aoshima is considered alone or in combination with Wynn. Aoshima discloses a game apparatus that can display advice data appropriate to the state of

the game such that the player can master the game while playing it. (Abstract). Nowhere does Aoshima disclose displaying a “player tracking information image” that includes “a player name, player ID, point data, progressive data, extra credit data, bonus data, loyalty data, or award data.” (Claim 22).

Thus, as explained above, Wynn and Aoshima, considered alone or in combination, fail to disclose the feature of a “player tracking information image” that includes “a player name, player ID, point data, progressive data, extra credit data, bonus data, loyalty data, or award data.” (Claim 22). Claim 22, as presently amended, is therefore not obvious in view of Wynn and Aoshima. Claims 27 and 31 are patentable for at least the same or similar reasons.

The remaining dependent claims incorporate the features of the independent claims on which the dependent claims are based. Therefore, the dependent claims are patentable for at least the same reasons as claims 22, 27, and 31.

Conclusion

The claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, allowance of the claims at the earliest possible date is requested.

If prosecution of this application can be assisted by telephone, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorneys at (510) 663-1100.

Applicants do not believe that any additional fees are required to facilitate the filing of this Amendment. However, if it is determined that such fees are due, please charge such additional fees to Deposit Account No. 504480 (Order No. IGT1311).

Respectfully submitted,
WEAVER AUSTIN VILLENEUVE & SAMPSON LLP

/Jeffrey K. Weaver/

Jeffrey K. Weaver
Registration No. 31,314

/Stephen C. Glade/

Stephen C. Glade
Registration No. 57,601

P.O. Box 70250
Oakland, CA 94612-0250